

The Path Towards Mysticism: A Critical Examination of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan

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Boston College

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

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THE PATH TOWARDS MYSTICISM: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF
HAYY IBN YAQZAN

Thesis

by
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Abstract:

THE PATH TOWARDS MYSTICISM: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF HAYY IBN YAQZAN

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Hayy Ibn Yaqzan is a novel whose protagonist seeks intellectual knowledge and spiritual fulfillment over a lifetime of scientific experimentation and solitary rumination. The culmination of his efforts is not to independently verify the Islamic faith, as his final product differs dramatically from their dogma. Instead, he is looking to seek knowledge, not empathy from his Creator by knowing him directly, instead of worshiping him through the process of prayer. This education alienates him from the society on the other island, as they are unable or unwilling to follow his example. By accepting this path, instead of following the dominant creed and code of the populous, Hayy is unable to live comfortably within that setting and must return to his place of solitaire amongst nature.

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I.) Introduction

Hayy ibn Yaqzan is a novel whose protagonist seeks intellectual knowledge and spiritual fulfillment over a lifetime of scientific experimentation and solitary rumination. The culmination of his efforts is not to independently verify the Islamic faith, as his final product differs dramatically from their dogma. Instead, he is looking to seek knowledge, not empathy from his Creator by knowing him directly, instead of worshiping him through the process of prayer. This education alienates him from the society on the other island, as they are unable or unwilling to follow his example. By accepting this path, instead of following the dominant creed and code of the populous, Hayy is unable to live comfortably within that setting and must return to his place of solitaire amongst nature.

His life's journey is a nonstop educational *tour de force* that divides itself into seven stages of intellectual achievement that are marked by multiples of seven year periods. Much as how Dante's Divine Comedy mimics the story of Exodus without ever giving explicit hints of comparison, this novel imitates the creation story of Genesis. The most outward sign of this comparison elicited is from the repeated use of the numeral seven throughout the novel. His life and education are divided into either seven year spans, or multiples thereof. This is important for Ibn Tufayl as he is elevating Hayy as a new Adam, that lacks the flaws of his original namesake. The first six days of creation serve as the testament of knowledge, as all that exists within the universe came into being at that time, and it is God's plan for all of these intricacies to be discovered by His most prized possession, man. The first six periods of Hayy's life are devoted to the discovery and understanding of knowledge so that he may become closer to his Creator. On the

seventh day God rested and reflected upon all that he has done and states that it was good. Hayy is similar in his 7th period as he has conquered all that was presented to him as a solitary human, and realizes that reflection and contemplation are all that he truly desires. With contemplation as his chief desire, he leaves the inhabited island that he wished to proselytize, and returns to his own where he is able to imitate God during His own 7th day period.

Hayy's last known age in this work is fifty years old, which is seven multiples of seven, solidifying himself with the past, with one extra year to symbolize him being one with god. Man was created on the sixth day, but Hayy supersedes mediocrity as he has mastered the life of reflection; moreover, he can then be identified with the number seven. Forty-nine is the product of seven sevens, but this life of contemplation has led him to becoming one with God.

If numerology is to be trusted, Ibn Tufayl shows that when one follows the path of philosophy and mysticism, he ultimately renounces the tenets of his own faith, while still paying lip service to them, to assuage the fears of the community, as he can be seen as a threat to their way of life. Hayy exemplifies the burdens carried by those who have direct knowledge of the divine—they must abandon possessions, law, and custom as they have no bearing upon him. He transcends all ethical concerns and his only true passion, his only true desire, is to never leave the state of unadulterated, meditative bliss. This pushes him away from society, making him a pariah to those he has abandoned; his dedication and practices grant him both scorn and reverence from the populace, but they never will open their homes and hearts to him.

II.) The Birth and Rearing of Hayy ibn Yaqzan (From Birth until Age 7)

There are two competing stories for the creation of Hayy ibn Yaqzan and both containing strong Quranic imagery—he was either created from the earth without parents, or his mother abandoned him to save his life. The first tale is heavily dependent upon the location of his generation, as people normally are not molded and animated solely by the natural movements of the earth. This island is believed to be perfect in all aspects, and only here could this phenomenon occur as, “[t]his is possible, they say, because of all places on earth, that island has the most tempered climate. And because a supernal light streams down on it, it is the most perfectly adapted to accept the human.”¹

The narrator describes the island to be located off the coast of India, but it does not correspond in the traditional viewing of the most hospitable climate—the fourth zone. The Ancient world was divided into seven zones based upon climate, with the fourth zone, which encompassed the Middle East and China, as the most moderate. Ibn Tufayl seems to be suggesting that these calculations are incorrect, and that the best climate is located along the equator, as it receives the most uniform temperature throughout the year. His reasoning is that the sun warms the earth through radiation of its light, and whenever light exists, heat follows suit. The Sun is enormous in size allowing it to shine upon half of the earth at one time, and the center of the light would be focused on those who can see the zenith directly above their heads, which occurs along equator. This is not an everyday occurrence due to the movements of celestial bodies, but it only happens

¹ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 103

twice a year during the equinoxes. The other times of the year will be spent in a uniform climate, which are never too hot or cold, as, "...it declines six months to the north and six to the south."²

His placement of the islands off the coast of India could be interpreted as a subtle clue to the character that Hayy will possess. In Medieval Islamic thought, the Brahmins of India were treated in dialogues as interlocutors of pure rational thought without any aid of the divine. One of the stories of Hayy's creation is that he was formed solely from the natural movements of the earth and the light of the sun. This mode of transformation differs from that of Adam, as he is not being created by an anthropomorphic God, but from the earth itself. Perhaps the purpose of this insistence of the island's location and climate is a faint foreshadowing of the path that Hayy will follow—he will start with reason and end with the divine, which echoes this creation as the natural movements of the earth by themselves is not enough for the creation of a human being, a Creative Being is necessary for this transformation.

Ibn Tufayl goes to great length in explaining the climate of the island, as heat and light will remain a central theme representing the divine and/or the animating quality of beings. Light is regularly used as metaphor for the divine in many allegories, and it is no different here. By explaining that light travels in a uniform motion from the sun to this island throughout year, giving it the best climate for growth, symbolizes the special care that God shows this part of the world, and how it is possible for miracles to occur here.

² Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 105

As was previously stated from light, heat follows, these two qualities are important in the creation of Hayy as the text states:

[b]ut first I should say that those who claim Hayy came into being spontaneously say that in a pocket of earth on that island, over the years, a mass of clay worked until hot and cold, damp and dry were blended in just the proper way, their strengths perfectly balanced....The clay labored and churned, and in the viscous mass there formed what looked like bubbles in boiling water.³

The heat produced from the divine light emanating from the sky occurred in such a perfect manner that clay was able to solidify and metamorphose into a human being.

While heat may be responsible for creating the body, the intellectual capacity of this being was created by a stream of sunlight. When his body became fully formed, the spirit entered his body as a simultaneous action forging a bond that is, "...virtually indissoluble, not only in the purview of the senses, but also in that of the mind. For it should be clear that this spirit emanates continuously from God."⁴ The bond is not only linking the flesh and the mind of the being, but it is connected directly to God; another foreshadowing of the metaphysical project Hayy will spend his life discovering.

Ibn Tufayl explains the phenomenon of consciousness with a metaphor of how the sun lights the world:

[consciousness] is analogous to the sunlight that constantly floods the earth. Some objects, like transparent air, are not lit by it at all. Others, opaque but not shiny, are lit partially, differing in color according to their different receptivities. Still others, polished bodies such as mirrors, take up light maximally; and if these mirrors have a certain concave form, fires start in them

³ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 106

⁴ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pp 106-7

from the concentrated rays of light. The same holds for the spirit which flows eternally from God's word to all that is.⁵

This analogy will be referred back to repeatedly through the novel, so it must be handled with care now to illuminate future reference. This first aspect mentioned is air, and it represents all inanimate objects that lack consciousness such as a rock, drops of water, or flames from a fire. No matter how long or brightly the divine light shines upon these objects, it will always shine directly through it without producing a reflection. The next set of objects exists on a continuum of ever increasing reflection, and they are labeled by Hayy as opaque. Those on the dullest side of this spectrum would be plants, which are living beings, but lack what is believed to be a rational consciousness. It was probably assumed by the author that these beings belonged there because he never witnessed evidence of these objects performing actions which may be considered the derivatives of thought, such as speaking. On the other end of this spectrum, the shinier side, would be animals. They are categorized as beings with a greater level of consciousness because of their reactions to pain and because humans can witness audibly their means of communication. Finally, the convex mirrors are those that can reflect the light of God, which would be to accept the gift of intellectual capabilities fully, and use it to produce fire, which may signify creation—these beings are able to use their intellect to create new objects from existing materials, a feat that other, less shiny beings are not capable; moreover, it shows that they are closer to God as he is the ultimate craftsman.

⁵ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 107

The second story of creation, and the one whose authenticity is testified to by the narrator, is that he was born of a royal blood line. His mother was the sister to a king who forbade her to marry before he himself had done the same. She, however, disagreed with his right to guardianship over her, lawfully (though how this could be is never mentioned within the story) married her kinsman, Aware, and bore a male son. Without naming her child, she sealed him in an ark and pushed him out to sea while asking God for help: “Almighty God, you formed my baby ‘when it was nothing, a thing without a name.’ You fed him in the darkness of my womb and saw that he was smooth and even and perfectly formed. In fear of that wicked tyrant I entrust him to your care. I beg you shed your bounty upon him. Be with him. Never leave him, most merciful God!”

The tide carried young Hayy to the shore of an uncultivated island, where he began to cry from hunger pangs. A doe, hearing the infant came towards him thinking that he was her missing fawn, loosened the top portion of the ark with her hoof, freeing the baby. Feeling sorry for his plight, she began to nurse him, and adopted him as her own.

Both of these origin stories mimic important Quranic figures: Adam and Moses, and the similarities of the stories should be investigated to gain a better understanding of exactly what Ibn Tufayl is trying to accomplish within this work. The formation of Hayy from clay is similar to both Adam’s creation, and the creation of the universe. Before the universe was created, all mass was centered in one position until God was able to make it explode with a concentration of heat and light, “Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together [as one unit of creation] before We clove

them asunder?"⁶ The matter then floated disjointedly throughout the nothingness of space until He, "turned to the sky, and it had been (as) smoke. He said to it and to the earth: 'Come together, willingly or unwillingly.' They said: 'We come (together) in willing obedience.'" ⁷ God is the driving force for the creation of all existence through his direct involvement. Had it not been for his sundering of the heavens and their reshaping, the universe would not exist as it is today. When the planets formed into their present shapes, God created Adam out of clay and gave him dominion over all animals and the right to name them.⁸

The story of Hayy's creation is both similar and slightly different than these accounts of creation. Though Hayy was created from clay like Adam and animated by the light and heat of the Almighty, there is no anthropomorphic God breathing life into him. Instead, his formation seems natural as the earth is slowly shaping his body out of mud, albeit he is coming into existence without human parents. As it was eluded to earlier with the placement of the island near India, Ibn Tufayl is foreshadowing the mystical view of God, as it is nature taking the leading role in his generation, not the direct intervention of a Supreme Being. This is not a God that will communicate directly with Hayy in conversation as Yahweh did with Moses; knowing Him will require a subtler approach, much as his own creation.

⁶ Quran 21: 30

⁷ Quran 41:11

⁸ *Translation of Sahih Muslim, Book 42: Number 7134:*

'A'isha reported that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: The Angels were born out of light and the Jinns were born out of the spark of fire and Adam was born as he has been defined (in the Qur'an) for you (i. e. he is fashioned out of clay).

He is also Adam-like as he is being granted the right to “name” the animals under his domain on the island. Though a system of classification already exists to identify these animals, dominion is to be understood as the necessity for scientific achievement. Hayy is giving implicit consent by the Creator to conduct scientific observations as there are no explicit challenges to his endeavors. It is through these experiments that he truly understands the nature of God, like Adam who understood his power, when authority was given to him over all other beings.

Hayy may also be a better version of Adam, as he is never ejected from paradise. In fact, it is possible that God is actually overseeing and allowing Hayy to survive. The likelihood of a doe finding a human child and raising him as her own is rather slim, unless Providence interferes in some aspect. The same is true with him discovering fire, and a boat appearing just when he needs to reach the other island. God is fully supporting Hayy’s endeavor in becoming both a philosopher and a mystic, and he is to be an exemplar of the excellence of man, instead of a cautionary tale as is Adam’s fall.

The second story mimics the Quran’s portrayal of Moses. He was born during a Hebrew population boom, and the Pharaoh of Egypt feared that they may form an alliance with their enemies. To effectively end this potential threat, he ordered all Hebrew, male infants to be slaughtered. Jochebed, Moses’ mother, feared for the life of her son and after three months placed him in a reed basket and let him float down the Nile after God’s commandment to do so. The wife of Egypt’s Pharaoh, Asiya, found Moses on the bank of the river and convinced the Pharaoh to adopt him as they were childless.

The parallels between the stories of Moses and Hayy are striking, as the former begins his life as an ethnicity that is being put to death, but ends up in the care of the leader who is slaying his people. While Hayy is of noble lineage, he is to be raised by a troop of deer, creatures who are slaughtered for food by stronger predators. The cruxes of these stories differ because one man is to become the paragon of law, while the other will live outside of it. This may have an impact on how they interact with the divine. Moses was able to meet directly with God in the form of a burning bush, and the latter gave the former a list of rules for his people to live by. Hayy differs from Moses as communing with God is the final step in his training, and trying to explain this idea to others and failing, solidifies the importance of this subjective experience. Moses is to lead a nation, while Hayy is responsible only for himself, as his way is harder to live by than Moses', as he shuns the realm of materialism completely, while the latter's rules are meant as a protection and projection of this lifestyle.

This second story of his creation is ripe with moral drama, that Hayy will never know about, or comprehend its complexities. It is uncertain why Ibn Tufayl included this part, unless he was trying to show that man can ultimately be removed from all circumstances and follow Hayy's path. Every family has problems, and Hayy's is no different, but he is able to separate himself from them, though not by his own volition. It is necessary then, that all men who walk this path must detach themselves from all filial ties, or he will ultimately become anchored to the physical world.

Regardless of which creation story is "correct", the doe takes Hayy into her custody and takes care of his physical needs. She nourishes him with her milk for two

years and then begins to take him on foraging expeditions when he is able to walk. She exhibited the kindness of a loving mother unto her child as she brought him to trees bearing fruit, provided him water when thirsty, and shaded him from the sun when it became overwhelming.

Most of what Hayy will be taught of pity and compassion comes from this animal, and the rest from the celestial beings. Though she keeps him alive, and they care for each other's survival, her lessons are not long-lasting. By the end of his life, Hayy gives up pitying and caring for lesser beings, such as plants and animals, and does not interfere with their life's direction. It is possible that Tufayl is suggesting that these two qualities are not natural, but exist through tradition. Hayy's own mother abandoned him to the elements, with no guarantee of survival, so that she may be safe from the King's wrath. Perhaps it is being suggested that human beings act as the check to either allow these qualities to flourish, or wither depending upon the laws of society. The laws of nature require a delicate balance that pity may interfere with, throwing nature into disarray.

While living with the deer, he begins to see that they have natural advantages over him in terms of physical prowess. When thinking about their strengths, "[h]e observed the animals from this perspective and saw how they were clothed in fur, hair or feathers, how swiftly they could run, how fiercely they could fight, and what apt weapons they had for defense against any attacker—horns, tusks, hooves, spurs and claws."⁹ He finally realized that he was able to overcome his physical deficiencies through his rational capacity, as he could create protective clothing from the flora of the island: "...he took

⁹ Ibn Tufayl. *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 110

some broad leaves from a tree and put them on, front and back. Then out of plaits of palms and grass he made something like a belt about his middle and fastened his leaves to it. But he had hardly worn it at all when the leaves withered and dried and, one by one, fell out.”¹⁰ After fashioning himself clothing, he began creating an offensive weapon to protect against assault: “[h]e got some good sticks from a tree, balanced the shafts and sharpened the points. These he would brandish at the animals that menaced him.”¹¹

Hayy deems himself to be deficient in comparison to the deer as he judges himself solely upon physicality. It is not until he accepts that he is different and has a stronger intellectual capacity that he is able to overcome adversity. This is evidenced by him creating clothing out of the carcass of an eagle. By wearing it, all other animals become afraid of him except his doe. This would not have been the case if he remained naked. It is not Hayy’s fault that he is judging himself upon an incorrect standard—he does not understand all of the capabilities that humans possess, so he sees the strength of the buck as admirable. It is only when he starts to use his reasoning to his advantage does he see the greater potential of himself over all other animals.

This phase of his life ends with his quest for finding clothing, and it is vaguely reminiscent to the fall of Adam. After eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they become ashamed by the fact that they are naked and hide in bushes, a telltale sign that they have broken God’s commandment. The emphasis in this story is not that attaining knowledge will expel you from paradise as it was in Genesis, but instead it

¹⁰ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 110

¹¹ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 110

will lead you to God. Like Adam, Hayy uses his intellect and knows that he must wear clothes because he is naked. The difference is that Adam feels shame, while Hayy is working out of necessity—he needs to protect himself against both the elements and predators.

III.) Hayy's Search for the Spirit through Dissection (Age 7-21)

For the first seven years of his life, Hayy became inseparable with the doe that raised him. As she aged, he began to take care of her by bringing her to pastures filled with sweet fruit and feeding her the best food that he could find. When he was seven, his mother suddenly died from old age, frightening the boy into action. While she was laying there motionless, he began shouting to try and wake her, all the while becoming overwhelmed with grief. This marks the first time that Hayy uses his reasoning capacity through the form of science and it is to achieve a very practical process—reviving the animal that has been a mother to him. He did not see any external wounds on her body and assumed that it must be something internal. While trying to discover where the pain was occurring, he opened her eyelids and looked into her ear canal, but he saw nothing that looked out of the ordinary.

His mind was racing for an answer to alleviate her pain and then he remembered that his senses were sometimes stymied by negative obstructions, and if he were to remove that obstruction the body would function properly again: “[h]e knew that when he shut his eyes or covered them, he saw nothing until the obstruction was removed; if he stopped his ears with his fingers he could not hear until the obstacle was gone; and if he held his nose he would smell nothing until the passageway was clear again.”¹² Hayy reflected upon his previous observations of dead animals and remember that there were hollow portions within all of their bodies—the head, chest, and abdomen. He coupled that information with the knowledge that he could restrict the actions of his other appendages,

¹² Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 111

but what was beating in his chest, he could not stop. The heart was the most important faculty as it is the seat of his internal operating system, and he took great lengths to protect his own: “[f]or this reason, in fact, when fighting with animals, he had always been especially careful to protect his breast from their horns—because he could feel that there was something there.”¹³ The heart was the center of power and not the brain as “[c]onceivably he could get along without his head.”¹⁴ Though it is unclear how he came to this position of the heart and not the brain being the operating system of the body, it might have stemmed from empirical evidence. Perhaps he saw an animal lose its head and its central nervous system kept the body moving for a short period of time before death finally overtook the animal.

Looking for the answer to save her life, he reflected upon other beasts that he saw in the same state as the doe’s and whether they ever got better on their own without outside influence. Not remembering that to ever be the case, he fashioned medical tools from sharp pieces of wood and stone and cut into her breast, searching for the cause of her pain. Cutting into her diaphragm, he began searching the chest cavity until he found the heart and stated, “[i]f this organ has the same structures on the other side as it does here, then it really is directly in the center and it must be the organ I’m looking for—especially since its position is so good, and it is so beautifully formed, so sturdy and compact, and better protected than any other organ I have seen.”

¹³ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 112

¹⁴ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 112

Using his scalpel fashioned from wood, he opened up her heart and saw the two ventricles. After a few moments of analyzing what he saw he states,

I see that blood is found in all the organs, not confined to one as opposed to others. But what I've been looking for all along is something uniquely related to this special position and something I know I could not live without for the batting of an eye. Blood I have often lost in quantity fighting with the animals, but it never hurt me; I never lost any of my faculties. What I'm looking for is not in this chamber. But the left one has nothing in it; I can see that it is empty....I can only believe that what I was searching for was here but left, leaving the chamber empty and the body without sensation or motion, completely unable to function.¹⁵

The emptiness of the chamber will propel forth his investigation and dissection of many animals to find the animating spirit.

His autopsy concluded after finding the empty chamber, and he left the doe mother where she lay. As the body was decomposing due to the heat, he saw two ravens battle each other to the death. The victor then buried his opponent by piling twigs upon his body. Inspired by the birds, Hayy buried his doe's corpse. Ibn Tufayl seems to be showing that the need for burial and honoring the dead is a very natural act, and that is why it shows up in some form in all religions. There are many practical elements in burying the dead as it would be hard to physically watch a loved one's corpse decompose before one's eyes. Once they bury them in the ground, they can remember them for who they were and not what they are now. It also helps to maintain the natural ecosystem of the island, which will become a central tenet to Hayy's practices. By burying the dead, the bodies will help to re-fertilize the earth giving way to new life.

¹⁵ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 114

The investigation into his doe's death marked his first adventure into science, and this event is followed by a discovery that has both real and metaphorical meaning to Hayy's education. One day, while journeying on the island, a fire breaks out amongst a bed of reeds which fills him with both a sense of awe and terror as he looks upon the dancing flames. Wanting to know what it is, he reaches forward to grasp it, but it scalds his hand, which quickly recoils. He grabs the non-burning end of an engulfed reed and brings it with him to the cave he decided to live in after the death of the doe. With painstaking care, he nestles the flame within a bundle of kindling to make sure it never extinguishes. Fire excited him as he believed it to be the greatest gift one could find, and he tried many experiments with it. He threw all sorts of items into the flame to see how the fire interacted with them, making note if they were combustible. One time, he threw a fish on the fire, and the intoxicating aroma overwhelmed him. This was the first time that he ate another animal's flesh, and the deliciousness of it drove him towards hunting and fishing, which he soon excelled.

Much like the story of Prometheus granting fire to man, Hayy's life will also be changed as much as those humans who received the Titan's gift. The attainment of fire symbolizes the metaphysical break that Ibn Tufayl will have Hayy undergo with Quranic tradition, as fire represents spiritual independence from tradition. Though he has no knowledge of the Quran, Ibn Tufayl does and is writing this section of the text in a way that is revealing his true intentions for spirituality. This is not to say that Hayy will become an atheist, instead he will be able to independently verify the existence of God. Ibn Tufayl is writing this novel as a way to prove the existence of God in a way that does

not need the Quran for justification. In fact, he is going to have Hayy discover God through the scientific process showing that faith and reason are not incongruent. He does deviate from the Quran as his God is non-anthropomorphic; this is not to say that the Quran is false, but that it is masked in myth and symbols for the average person to understand the divine. Hayy does not need these physical trappings to understand His true nature, as he possesses both the discipline and intellectual properties necessary for one to achieve independence from a dependence on physical qualities.

The discovery of fire also helps Hayy in the transition in becoming human. While living with the troop, he fed mostly on fruits and nuts, but he never truly belonged with them. The deer feared him when he began dressing in clothes, furthering the divide between him and the only community he has known, and it severed completely with the death of his doe. Having no attachment to them, he begins to see them not as equals, but inferiors because they lack the rational capacities that he possesses. This helps him to break from them completely when he begins to use fire as a means of cooking meat. By not being welcomed by the troop, he is ascending to his rightful place as the superior creature.

With the discovery of fire sparking his renewed interest in the investigation for the governing aspect of living beings, he captures a beast, restrains it, and dissects it while it is living. He exposes the left ventricle then, “[c]utting into the heart, he saw the chamber, filled with a steamy gas, like white mist. He poked in his finger—it as so hot it

nearly burnt him, and the animal died instantly.”¹⁶ He concludes that the heat emanating from this chamber was the spark of life that guided and directed all other organs.

Discovering fire before the soul makes sense as Ibn Tufayl believes heat and light to be the most important aspects of human beings. This is evidenced with his attention to the climate of the island, his birth from the mixing of heat and clay, and the coldness in the doe’s heart. For Hayy to understand the necessity of the soul, he must understand the role heat plays in its creation.

Hayy’s quest for knowledge of the animating feature of creatures has extended past the autopsies of the first two beasts. He begins to dissect many other animals to understand their basic motor functions and gathers that, “...each animal, although many in respect of its parts, its various senses and types of motion, was nonetheless one in terms of that spirit which stems from a single fixed place and diffuses from there to all the organs. All parts of the body are simply its servants or agents.”¹⁷ All of the parts of the body are used for a specific purpose—the eyes are for seeing, the nose for smelling, hands for touching, etc, and the spirit governs and chooses which organ will be used for the correct procedure based upon what it deems best suited for the particular job. To explain this better, he uses a simile of himself and his tools, as he possesses many different tools such as his spear and his dissecting tools, but he must decide which to use for the best situation—he would not use his dissecting tools to hunt a lion, nor use the spear to delicately open the hearts ventricles. Over time tools break from repeated use

¹⁶ Ibn Tufayl. *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 117

¹⁷ Ibn Tufayl. *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 117

and the same is true of the body. Obstructions may appear and block the nerves that run from the spirit to a specific organ, making it unable to perform its specific duty. If too many of these organs are blocked, then the spirit becomes extinct, and death overtakes him.

These fourteen years are marked by his focus on all that is physical. Not only is he performing these experiments, he is also creating new items. This is the only time in Hayy's life that he spends so much attention in creating physical objects. It can be assumed that he is trying to enjoy a life of comfort as he creates new items to make his life easier as he spends his time fashioning clothing from skins, producing thread from animal hair, building a storehouse to keep excess food, keeping chickens for eggs, taming horses to chase down animals, making spears from the horns of wild cows, and creating a shield from rawhide. This will be the last mention of him performing these actions, as he has mastered all that arises from the physical forms, and will spend the remainder of his time trying to understand the immaterial soul.

IV.) Being is One (21-28)

After a grueling fourteen year period of scientific classification, Hayy is going to use the data he collected to try and prove that everything existing is ultimately united as one contiguous being. He is not trying to promulgate a belief that this all occurs within the physical forms of objects, as it is easy to see that the length, width, and breadth of a rock does not coincide with the dimensions of a tree, but that all objects have an immaterial form that is connected through its relation with the divine. He sees a pattern existing in nature that all objects exist as a part of system; in this way all objects exist as many and one much like organs in the human body. To prove this point, he is going to try to deconstruct the observable properties of an object so that, in the language of John Locke, only primary qualities remain. His desire is to not end with that result, but use it as the starting ground for the existence of Platonic forms. Though all objects are independent in nature, they are all ultimately bound to the form they resemble, and to the ineffable spirit who creates and instills primal functions within the objects. By reducing all objects to their base category and determining their primal functions, Hayy deduces that all objects have the spirit of the Creator coursing through their being, which unites and guides them in a contiguous fashion.

After compiling data for fourteen years through the rigorous forms of classifications, he began to notice that all physical objects, plants, animals, rocks, etc, ultimately underwent two forms of growth—generation and decay. Regardless of the species chosen, these were the only consistent attributes as a great deal of diversity existed, even among those of the same species, such as different sized wingspans, beaks,

etc, which seemed, "...to be manifold and beyond number."¹⁸ Continuing his scientific investigation, he notes that all objects of a certain classification are different, and can ultimately be reduced to an even smaller subset of data. An analogy he uses through the entirety of this portion of his thought exercise is based upon the inner workings of his human body as, "[e]ven his own identity seemed complex and multiform, because he was viewing it in the perspective of the diversity of his organs and the specialization of each by its own specific capacity to perform its own specific task. Each organ, moreover, was itself divisible into a great many parts."¹⁹

The human body remains analogy raises a rather perplexing question—how can one be both many and singular? His inquiry into human anatomy resulted in him knowing that all beings were composed of many individual parts, which all worked towards different goals. The heart pumps blood and the kidney processes urine, yet they have the ultimate desire to function and keep the body they inhabit alive. When one looks at the ultimate purpose of these organs, one can see that they are working as a system to keep the greater construct, Hayy, alive; therefore, the body is ultimately one when the purpose of the organs is to achieve the same desired result. He ponders why these different organs exist and how they know what their purpose is to be, and he ultimately remarks that the Spirit is what guides them in their knowledge. The Spirit is essentially similar to Hayy and his tools, as he must decide when to use which tool and for what purpose. When he wants to skin a fish he would use a knife instead of a spear, as it is more

¹⁸ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 119

¹⁹ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 119

conducive for the task at hand. The spirit functions in the same way using the organs in a way that best suits their physical capabilities and limitations.

He then extends his inquiring mind towards all living beings of a similar species and noticed, “[w]hat differences he could find were negligible, compared to all the points of congruity.”²⁰ At this point, he hypothesizes that all beings of a similar species are similar in that one single spirit is what animates them all, but it is parceled out in smaller portions to individual beings. Elaborating on this idea, he states, “[i]f somehow what was divided among all those hearts could be collected in one great vessel, then it would be one thing, like on quantity of water or punch divided into different bowls and then collected again.”²¹ The universal spirit will govern certain inherent qualities within beings, such as animals being alike in having sensation, voluntary motion, and nutrition. This point will be explained later in this period of his life, but it can be seen that the argument is starting to gain clarity. All beings are guided by an ineffable spirit which powers the primal necessities of animate objects; characteristics that exist in varying degrees amongst animals are particular to certain species, and not attributable to the spirit. An example of this would be birds having wings and monkeys having opposable thumbs, though they differ in this quality, they are still empowered with the basic need for life. These differences also can exist in varying forms within species themselves, as secondary qualities of animals may change such as blue jays being blue and cardinals red, but they are ultimately similar.

²⁰ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 120

²¹ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 120

The quest for life, which united the animal kingdom, can extend to plants also because of their desire to exist. Mimicking the mirror analogy used earlier in the book, plants still subsist as lower beings in comparison to animals, as they lack the same level of awareness which is brought about by their sense perception, locomotion and sensation. Even without these qualities of extended consciousness, the spirit still flows as freely through them as it does through other animate objects; they are just unable to use it as effectively as beings with greater intellectual capacities.

The first half of this argument devoted itself in unifying animate objects in his belief that being is one, by using characteristics that define life. The attributes he will use to unite inanimate objects will be of a much broader category, allowing it to also include animated life forms. When focused upon the inanimate, he concerned himself primarily with the four primordial elements—earth, water, air, and fire and tried to separate them from secondary and tertiary qualities. After careful observation of these objects, he noted the transient properties that existed in them when they interacted with other elements, “[h]e perceived that warm bodies grow cold and cold ones hot; he watched water turn to steam, steam to water; burning things to embers, ashes, flame and smoke.”²² He decides that these effects are not the result of the universal spirit, but are similar to the characteristics shown within individual plants and animals in relation to the species as a whole. After deconstructing the tertiary qualities he sees that there is an ultimate relation between all inanimate objects, and they are the universal characteristics of length, breadth, and depth

²² Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 121

Both animate and inanimate objects are ultimately one when they are boiled down to their primary qualities—they are physical objects which are ultimately tied together because they are made of matter. He then states that all being, both inanimate and animate, are one because of this of this observation. Believing that because all being is made of matter, any object that meets the right criteria can come to life, “[t]he only differences between this archetypal living being and any inanimate objects, in fact, were the life functions it manifested through the use of ‘tools’ in animals and plants. But perhaps these functions were not properly theirs, but came from some other being. And if they came to other objects, perhaps these too would come to life.”²³ In summation, all objects have the ability to come to life if the Spirit wills it. Hayy is coming to the assumption that there exists a world of both physical objects and their perfected form that is immaterial and ultimately comes from the spirit.

To discover the realm of forms, he needs to find something that lacks all qualities that give rise to plurality. After an exhaustive search, he believes he has found just that—heaviness and lightness are the only two qualities, which everything in this world must succumb. To understand these qualities he uses the example of air and how it is always light and can never be heavy: “[i]n the same way Hayy found that smoke would not stop rising unless trapped; and even then it would curl around, left and right, and if there were an air passage, escape and continue rising, since air could not contain it. Hayy observed that if he filled a skin with air, tied it shut and pushed it under water it would try to wriggle free and rise until taken out and restored to air. Then it would stop wriggling

²³ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 121

upwards and lie quite still.”²⁴ By investigating only one phenomenon he elicits a principle that will be used to guide the entirety of his metaphysical project. His assumption is that air is always light because it always tries to ascend towards the heavens no matter the external forces applied to it: “...that both [lightness and heaviness] must stem from some separate principle, for if they belonged to body in virtue of its being then every material object would have both. In fact, however, we know that heavy objects have no buoyancy, and light ones no gravity; yet they remain bodies all the same.”²⁵

This principle is the causeway for travel between the realm of physical and immaterial forms, but the foundation he has built is unsound. He premises this point upon a false dilemma in which every object must be either objectively light or heavy and the quality is given by the spirit to each of these objects. Though he does not say it, he is implying that if an object existed as both light and heavy it would be a paradox as they both cannot exist within a single source. What he does not account for is the subjective account of what exactly constitutes heavy and light. Though an adult human is heavier than a child, it would exist as something lighter than an elephant. The failure may extend from his pre-modern concept of gravity and buoyancy, leading him to believe that neither effect lighter or heavier objects. Also one must note that the capacity to exist as two conflicting outcomes does not mean one is performing both at the same time. An example of this would be the ability for a human to be either calm or irate. He will not be both at

²⁴ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 122

²⁵ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 123

the same time, but he has the potential to be both, and this does not extend from some outside source, but from the internal confines of one's mind.

Hayy believes all objects are given the quality of being light or heavy by the Creator and because of that they will go where they naturally belong. This seems reminiscent of Aristotelian physics, where heavy objects want to remain at rest on earth, hence they are heavy, and light objects in the sky.²⁶ This, however, has been proven false through Newtonian physics and his first law of motion, "Every body persists in its state of being at rest or of moving uniformly straight forward, except insofar as it is compelled to change its state by force impressed." The force acting upon objects is not the Creator's will, but the force of gravity making it move either towards the heavens or the earth.

Regardless of the accuracy of his scientific investigation on this point, he comes to the belief that something exists not only in its physical form, but also as a higher nonmaterial element that cannot be ascertained through the senses, and only attained by the use of reason. Ibn Tufayl seems to have Hayy discover the Aristotelian forms of the soul: vegetative, animal, and rational, and applying them to the objects in which they correspond. As plant life remains the dimmest of all animate objects in terms of perceived consciousness, Hayy examines the vegetative soul first. He begins by applying a blanket statement that shows the unity of all beings, both inanimate and animate as all earthen objects—rocks, minerals, plants, and animals, all are a part of, "... a single totality which participates in a single form from which issues the tendency to fall when

²⁶ Aristotle. *Physics*. Kessinger Publishing: 2004. Chapter III

unimpeded or when lifted and let go.”²⁷ While all these objects participate in the natural tendency to be attracted towards the earth, only animate objects have the desire for life. These beings are similar in that they require nutrition—ingesting and breaking down material similar to itself for replenishment, and growth—the extension of the animate object in all three dimensions while giving respect to the set proportions that restrict. He is aware from previous inquiries that all animals possess those above mentioned qualities, but the animal soul differs as it is also capable of receiving sensation and locomotion. Much as was previously discussed before, not all plants and animals are created the same, so each of their souls differs slightly. They possess individual characteristics that are found only amongst their species, such as fish having gills and deer having antlers.

Like most people, he cannot understand the soul at this point in his life without including physical dimensions, and the only three attributes found in all earthly objects are length, width, and breadth. He believes that these parameters are given to each object, but they exist in an *a priori* state before their actual inception; though an individual man may be six feet tall, not all men are that height as they can be much shorter or taller. A better explanation that Hayy uses is how a ball of clay can be molded, and while its dimensions change, there exists an upper and lower limit on how it can be formed:

[h]e found that if he molded clay into some shape, for example into a ball, it had length, width and depth in a certain ratio; if he then took this ball and worked it into a cube or egg shape, its length, width and depth took on different proportions. But it was still the same clay.... The fact that one proportion could replace another made it apparent to him that the dimensions were a factor in their own

²⁷ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 124

right, distinct from the clay itself. But the fact that the clay was never totally devoid of dimensions made it plain to him that they were part of its being.²⁸

By using his analogy of clay, and how there are unseen parameters placed upon all that exists, it must follow that there exists a Creator who sets the limits for the development of specific beings. All beings can only do as much as the Creator allows it to be, based upon its own natural dispositions:

[o]ne by one he went over the forms he had known before and saw that all of them had come to be and all must have a cause. He then considered that in which the forms in here and found it to be no more than a body's propensity for such and such an action to arise from it. Water, for example, has a propensity to rise when strongly heated. This propensity is due to the form, for there is nothing there but body and certain perceptible things.... Thus the proneness of a body to certain kinds of motion as opposed to others must be due to its disposition or form.²⁹

For the first time in this section of Hayy's life, the narrator uses Quranic verses to illustrate that all of Hayy's philosophical thinking is in accordance with tradition.

Readers of this work may not understand all the subtleties and complex rhetoric that is used to bring about the position of an interactive deity, but when the narrator states, "I am the ears He hears by and the sight He sees by," and, "[i]t was not you but God who killed them; and when you shot, it was not you who shot, but God,"³⁰ one can plainly envision what Hayy is referring to even if the argument is too esoteric for most.

²⁸ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 126

²⁹ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 127

³⁰ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 127

V.) Investigation of the Heavens (Age 28-35)

The first 28 years of Hayy's life consisted in the investigation of earthly beings, who were all bound by the laws of generation and decay. After discovering that a universal spirit runs through all beings on this planet, he turns his attention to the stars as he believes them to be immortal, immaterial beings which emulate the divine. After studying their circular revolutions, he ponders how this universe formed—ex nihilo or had it always existed this way for eternity. After realizing that the deity could exist in both scenarios, he postulates the qualities that this ultimate being possesses and how he can emulate Him. These seven years mark a pivotal moment in his life as he realizes that the immaterial essence of beings are more important than his flesh, and if he was to emulate the divine he must focus upon the former.

The search for the unifying spirit was in vain as he realized that all of the animate objects that surrounded him on earth suffered from the same plight—they grew, reached a point of maturation, and then decayed back unto the earth. He also notes that animate objects do not have a monopoly upon these characteristics as inanimate objects can feel the physical effects of destruction as water and earth are damaged by fire, with the former changing its properties becoming steam and the latter becoming charred and possibly losing its strength.³¹ Believing that he has proved that all objects that exist on the earth are never purely immaterial, he extended his thinking towards the heavens as it remained the last vestige of inquiry. After a lengthy process of deductive reasoning, he concludes that the objects in the sky are all finite bodies, each having their own spherical shape, and

³¹ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 128

their motion consisted of a circular pattern across the sky. After having studied all of the natural sciences, he decided to focus the last leg of his scientific education upon understanding the mystery of astronomy.

Similar to his observations on earth with anatomy, there seemed to exist a pattern in their movements and he believed that they must all be working in unison for some great purpose, as he writes, “[h]e now knew that the courses of the stars could be set only in a number of spheres, all enclosed in one great sphere above them all, which moves the whole from east to west in a day and a night.”³² The patterns that he saw in the sky and the “oneness” that he saw with the celestial revolutions made him reflect upon the creation of the world.

When he thought about the generation of the world he came to two competing hypotheses which would not prevail over the other. The first position that he took was that the world has always existed, but this statement held many misgivings that he could not defeat. Two glaring contradictions existed to test the validity of this statement, and the first was that, “...any actual infinity could be shown to be impossible by the same sort of reasoning which had shown him the impossibility of an infinite physical body.”³³ While the second, “...he knew that the world could not exist without temporal events, thus it could not precede them. But what cannot precede temporal events must itself come to be in time.”³⁴ What this essentially boils down to is that Hayy reasons the world cannot

³² Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 130

³³ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 130

³⁴ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 130

be eternal as animate objects exist in this world, and because they exist in this world, time must be considered as an existing factor. He also goes on to elaborate that before animate objects existed, time may not have. This is because time is measured by beings with consciousness, but because beings did not exist, time did not exist; moreover, when animate objects began to appear a temporal event occurred bringing the world into time, thus making the world not eternal.

After carefully laying out his doubts for the existence of an eternal world, his juxtaposing theory—the world was created, posed a serious problem for Hayy as, “...he realized that the notion of the universe coming to be from nothing could be made sense of only in terms of a time before there was a universe—but time itself is an inseparable part of the universe. Therefore it is inconceivable that the origin of the universe came before the origin of time.”³⁵ The problem posing itself to Hayy from this hypothesis is the question of why the universe created itself at that exact moment that it did. One idea that he has is that the Cause for creation was provoked into creating the universe at that moment because something interacted with it resulting in that effect. This seemed illogical to him, as he does not believe anything else could exist at that time. This argument seems to segue perfectly into another attempt by the author to incorporate philosophical ideas into the theological teachings of his time. The reasoning behind Ibn Tufayl stating that there can be no other entity besides the cause at creation fits nicely with the Abrahamic tradition. By subtly alluding to it in his text he seems to again be pulling the readers along familiar territory.

³⁵ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 131

The purpose of this section of the text is not to try and prove which story of generation is true (much like the own story of his creation), but to show the necessity of God and how in both theories, He is not disproved. If the world was created *ex nihilo*, it is necessary for a being to perform the first action which would bring about the existence of the world. He postulates that it is an immaterial Creator, which is the cornerstone to his entire metaphysical project. By being immaterial, the Creator can exist outside of time and can logically be the central cause; if a material Creator were to exist, he would not be outside of time and there would be an *ad infinitum* line of material progression that would be necessary for this theory to work. Perhaps also, in a more sardonic sense, the necessity of an immaterial Creator is necessary as there exists no tangible proof for the existence of God outside of the holy books; immateriality allows Hayy to postulate the existence of a transcendent being that is a part of each of us only through the use of his syllogistic reasoning, which may have unsound principles.

The existence of a supreme being is also necessary in understanding the hypothesis that the world existed for eternity. For the universe to exist with motion it is paramount that there exists a First Mover to push the world into rotation. To understand this concept better there needs to be a distinction between motions that are finite and infinite. If the latter did not exist, then the movement of the celestial bodies would not continue for infinity making this hypothesis invalid unless an immaterial cause intervened: “[y]et it has already been proved that every material body must be finite. So every force in a material body must be finite. Should we discover a force engaged in an infinite task, that force cannot belong to a physical thing. But we have found the motion

of the heavens to be ceaseless and eternal, for *ex hypothesi* it has gone on forever and had no beginning. Ergo the force that moves them must be neither in their own physical structure nor in any external physical being. It can only belong to some Being independent of all material things and indescribable by any predicate applicable to them.”³⁶ The Creator must not be a physical being, if he were then the world would not exist eternally as “the push” would eventually lose speed bringing it to a halt; from this position, the immaterial Creator must have enacted motion within the cosmos that is as unending as the eternity of the world.

Whenever Hayy reaches a critical juncture in his thought processes, he tries to tie two seemingly contradicting things together and succeeds. Once he has done that, he proceeds to an even greater challenge than the one previously encountered. A pattern that emerges from this novel is that his insatiable thirst for knowledge leads him to try to understand the physical forms of objects, and from that inquiry he discovers the existence of an immaterial spirit that transcends the need for the interaction of the senses. First he investigated animals and then found its spirit. Then he investigated all physical earthly objects and discovered that they also had a spirit which connected them. This chapter is no different as he examines the stars and discovers an immaterial Creator, and from all this he finally takes a moment to reflect on the beauty of his discovery as, “[t]he moment Hayy realized that all that exists is His work, he saw things in a new and different light. It

³⁶ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 132

was as an expression of its Maker's power that he saw each thing now, marveling at His wonderful craftsmanship, the elegance of His plan and ingenuity of His work."³⁷

After determining that the existence of a Creator would fit with either hypothesis, he begins to postulate the qualities of this being. He believes him to be a being who is the epitome of good, mercy, and all other positive attributes. This extends primarily from empirical evidence he witnesses upon earth, as he believes that all animate objects are shown mercy and goodness from the Creator as they are given both the physical and mental abilities to survive and flourish with the capabilities that they have. Because the Creator shows this kindness to all animals, and he is the greatest power in the universe, these qualities are to be found in Him in the purest form. Hayy then goes on to state that the Creator is the epitome of being as all positive attributes that exist in the world are but a reflection of the magnificence of Him. For Hayy's metaphysical project to work at this juncture, he must ignore his thesis that "being is one." When trying to explain the qualities of the Creator he states,

[h]ow could He not transcend privation when the very concept means no more than absolute or relative non-being—and how could non-being be associated or confused with Him Who is pure being, Whose essence is necessary existence, Who gives being to all that is? There is no existence but Him. He is being, perfection, and wholeness. He is goodness, beauty, power, and knowledge. He is He.³⁸

In this section, Hayy is assuming that good is equivalent to being, and that evil is the privation of good. Is this statement actually accurate? Would a world with the absence of

³⁷ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 134

³⁸ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 134

good be one that is simply evil, or would it just be a world that simply exists without such problems of theodicy?

To understand this concept better, an example of animals will be used as Hayy also used them in a similar fashion. He believes that all animals are shown mercy from the Creator as they have the ability to survive, but to survive animals must maim and eat each other and plants for sustenance. Is the Creator really showing mercy to these animals when he teaches them how to better capture and devour his prey?

Perhaps there exists an esoteric teaching in this passage that Ibn Tufayl wants one to discover on his own. The repeated usage of “being is one” is a clue that he wrote the last passage merely as subterfuge so that his real intentions can be found by more careful readers. The Creator existing as the epitome of good is an Abrahamic notion of the loving Father sheltering and protecting his children, and Ibn Tufayl has to pay lip service to this belief to shelter his own philosophical enterprise. If the Creator existed as a being that was dualistically infused with the qualities of both good and evil, it would explain why all animate objects must eat and snuff out the life force of others. Though the Creator may want us to follow the qualities of good that emanate from him, we still are tempted by the evil that permeates from his source.

Finally, there is one last observation about the nature of the deity and how it fits with the Quranic depiction of God. As Ibn Tufayl writes, the nature of the cause becomes less associated with the pronoun “It” and more with “He”. Earlier within the novel, Hayy refers to this creative being as a Cause and believes him to transcend the physical in every way, but this seems to change as the novel moves forward. It would be strange for

Hayy to refer to this being as He, as he lacks all preconceived notions of tradition which would lead him to believe this. The Abrahamic tradition of creation is an idea that he would not be familiar with, so he would not associate Adam being created in God's image. If he were to use a different pronoun to explain this force would it not be more likely for him to use the feminine pronoun, as the creation of new life is an aspect of women? It is possible that Ibn Tufayl is not able to write as the character and not himself on this point, or he is again using familiar terminology that his readers would be accustomed. It may also be that Hayy does not believe that women exist for his species. Growing up in utter isolation from mankind possibly made him believe that he is special in his likeness to the Creator. This can also be confirmed by his observations that only he understands the Cause, while plants and animals are oblivious to It. He refers to God as a He because that is the only way that he knows how to approach Him.

VI.) Honoring the “Craftsman” through Creation (Age 35-50)

In this stage of his life, Hayy is trying to determine what it means to be the only earthly creature, that he is aware of, that can sense the divine. After devising what the three fates of all creatures are—not able to know the divine, knowing the divine and turning away, and knowing the divine and believing, he begins to determine how he can emulate Him better. He sees three stages in transcending his current state, and becoming divine-like. He must first put limits upon the pressures of the body, follow the examples of the stars, and only then can he see Providence in His most perfected form.

To become closer to the Necessarily Existent Being, Hayy attempts to discover how he has knowledge of Him. He resorts back to his senses and rules them out as an adequate means of understanding Him as, “[t]he senses, for this reason, can apprehend only divisible objects that is physical things. For these faculties are spread throughout a divisible thing and their object must be capable of a corresponding division. Thus any faculty in a physical body can apprehend only physical bodies and their attributes.”³⁹ The only way to understand Him, would be to contact Him with his true, immaterial Self. He began to despise his corporeal nature as it set constraints upon his true Self, as his body was destined to decay.

With his body slowly decaying, and his true Self contained in this walking tomb, there are three fates that he could choose. The first choice is that he would never know the Necessarily Existent Being,

³⁹ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 135

“[i]f, while in command of the body, he has not known the Necessarily Existent, never confronted Him or heard of Him, then on leaving the body he will neither long for this Being nor mourn His loss. His bodily powers will go to ruin with body, and thus make no more demands or miss the objects of their cravings now that they are gone. This is the fate of all dumb animals—even those of human form.”⁴⁰

Is Ibn Tufayl saying that animals have souls like humans, but they dissipate because they are unlearned? Learning then is the key to everlasting salvation as the knowledge of Him is necessary to maintain the chance of having a place in eternity. This may also be a subtle suggestion of the author to show the need for proselytizing. If the souls of heathens simply disappear, it must be a duty for every man who has knowledge of God to share it with others so that they too can partake in the pleasures of paradise.

The second fate man can be allotted is to know the Being, but turn away from him:

[i]f, while in charge of the body, he has encountered this Being and learned of His goodness but turned away to follow his own passions, until death overtook him in the midst of such a life, depriving him of the experience he has learned to long for, he will endure prolonged agony and infinite pain, either escaping the torture at last, after an immense struggle, to witness once again what he yearned for, or remaining forever in torment, depending on which direction he tended toward in his bodily life.⁴¹

This is a good description of the Quranic notion of Hell. Man is not to spend eternity there like in the Christian tradition, but is able to redeem himself if he sees the error of his ways and repents for his transgressions

Finally, the fate that should be the desire of all rational beings occurs,

⁴⁰ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 137

⁴¹ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 137

[i]f he knows the Necessarily Existent before departing the body, and turns to Him with his whole being, fastens his thoughts on His goodness, beauty, and majesty, never turning away until death overtakes him, turned toward Him in the midst of actual experience, then on leaving the body, he will live on in infinite joy, bliss, and delight, happiness unbroken because his experience of the Necessarily Existent will be unbroken and no longer marred by the demands of the bodily powers for sensory things—which alongside this ecstasy are encumbrances, irritants and evils.⁴²

Hayy begins his training in mysticism by practicing meditation. While in his trance, he comes to believe that self-realization and happiness are entirely dependent upon constant attention with the divine, as he feels euphoria in this state. The problem is that his training is not complete, and he is unable to maintain his concentration for long durations, as his mind becomes disrupted by the cries of animals, or sensory objects appearing in his mind's eye.

Wanting to know if this type of reflection was a particular condition of his being, he began to study animals again and noticed that, "...all animals, he saw, struggled day and night simply getting enough to eat, satisfying their appetites for food, water, mates, shade, and shelter, until their span of time was up and they died."⁴³ A similar conclusion was made of plants as their perception was even more dismal than that of animals. After ruling out all earthly beings on the planet, he takes his focus to the heavens. Seeing their rhythmic motion across the universe, and that they are luminous bodies, he asserts that they are, "...far above all change and decay, and he made a strong surmise that they too had identities apart from their bodies, identities which knew this necessarily existent

⁴² Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 138

⁴³ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 138

being and were neither physical nor imprints on anything physical.”⁴⁴ These beings are greater than him because they are without physical limitations, and are aware of the Creator without sensory distraction. Of course this is just a hypothesis of Hayy’s without real evidence supporting his claim, but it is a necessary argument to further his thought process. He needs someone to emulate, and the only beings left that he can see are stars. Ibn Tufayl is perhaps again writing in a way in which he knows the end result of his treatise, meeting a non-anthropomorphic God, but needs something to reach this plateau, which would be these heavenly bodies. By granting the stars these qualities, his thought project is safe as the validity of these statements could be neither proved nor disproved at the time of his writing.

Hayy comes to the realization that, “[h]is duties, then, seemed to fall under three heads, those in which he would resemble an inarticulate animal, those in which he would resemble a celestial body, and those in which he would resemble the Necessarily Existent Being.”⁴⁵ His resemblance to the inarticulate animal derives from the physical wants that he would need to suppress which are food, drink, and intercourse.

The first and only mention of sex within this novel is negative. This may stem from him feeling sexual urges, yet having no outlet for release as he lives without a mate. If a female human were present on the island, he could experience the good aspects of this relationship—companionship, and the creation of a family. Instead of seeing sex as a distraction from the divine, he may have come to believe that the love of another reflects

⁴⁴ Ibn Tufayl. *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 139

⁴⁵ Ibn Tufayl. *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 142

the love of God. There are drawbacks to this path, as it may end his pursuit of the divine as he would have social obligations to attend, and would not be able to spend his life perpetually in meditation.

Hayy understood that he needed to fulfill his physical cravings, but he was wary of fully immersing himself with gratuitous indulgences. With the desired result of communing with the divine, there are many actions that he cannot allow to supersede this union, one of those being a focus upon physical needs. To counteract his body's urges towards extremes, he devised a system of rules towards his appetite which included what he could eat, how often, and how much. He categorized all that was edible to him in three categories: "...plants that had not yet reached peak maturity, that is various edible green vegetables; fruits of plants that had completed their life cycles and were ready to produce a new generation, comprising fresh and dried fruit; and animal, terrestrial and marine."⁴⁶

Before making his choice of what to eat, he realizes that there is a choice even prior to that: he can either eat or starve. He knows that all beings have a set course, guided by the divine, leading to their ultimate fruition. If Hayy is to eat these beings, he would essentially be impeding the work of the divine. The only option available is to not eat, and allow himself to die. This is also a glaring contradiction of the divine's vision as he is superior to the creatures he would feed upon, as he has awareness of the divine's purpose.

His notion of eating is remarkable because the thought of predetermined fate crosses his mind. His justification for eating animals and stopping them from reaching

⁴⁶ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 144

their full potential is based upon his premise that he is allowed to do this solely because he is better. He never entertains the idea that their fate, ordained by the divine, is to be ended by him; ultimately they reach their “full potential” when he consumes them. This novel seems to exude an ambiguous stance on whether or not free will or predetermined fates exist.

He also seems to quickly dismiss the idea that he should die by starvation as he believes the divine wishes him to live. He never gives a reason for this assumption, except that he is greater than other animals, therefore he must live. Perhaps his assumption is wrong. If the divine is an immaterial spirit, and if the greatest part of the human is his immaterial Self, as it comes from Him, maybe his journey is complete by simply knowing this fact. His journey towards the divine could end at this point as he has full knowledge of the divine. Nowhere in his studies does he come to the conclusion that suicide is anathema to the Creator; perhaps to become fully one with this being is to first know him, and then become one with him after ending one’s own life.

Returning to his approach towards eating, he invokes a very rigid system regarding what he should eat, and when he should eat it, as he is trying to provide the least resistance to the Creator’s work as possible. When explaining his method, the first food items he chooses to eat are, “...things as the meat of fully ripened fruits, with seeds ready to reproduce, provided he was certain not to eat or harm the seeds or throw them in places unfit for vegetation—among rocks or in salt flats or the like.”⁴⁷ Fruit seems the most obvious choice for Hayy to eat, as they are the end result of a life cycle and have

⁴⁷ Ibn Tufayl. *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 145

met the divine's plans. The important aspect of him eating fruit is an emphasis on depositing seeds in places where they can flourish; this is because if he did not eat the fruit, the seeds would most likely blossom the following year as the soil proves bountiful for that crop.

The second and third classifications of foods that he was to eat, were only to be chosen if the former were not found and these were, "...fruits in which only the seed had food-value, such as nuts and chestnuts, or else green vegetables—on condition that he pick only the most abundant and prolific and be sure not to uproot them or destroy the seeds."⁴⁸ He tries to live a life that is consistent with maintaining the island's natural ecosystem, and to eat foods in order of lowest consciousness to those beings more like him. That is why he eats animals only when all other options are not available to him.

He also places limits upon himself on how much he can eat. He is not living a life of domination—he is not feasting to prove his supremacy, but is eating only enough to survive, and never more. Balance is the key to Hayy's essence, as he is trying to take care of the island, which willingly provides him with sustenance. While he is capable of overeating, and building superfluous structures throughout the island, he remains in his cave eating only out of necessity. Perhaps this difference is contrasted nicely with the Western novel Robinson Crusoe, whose titular character goes to great lengths in domesticating wildlife and building defensive structures throughout his island. There may be a fundamental difference between the West and Orient, where the former wants to

⁴⁸ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 145

preserve nature by making it succumb to man, while the latter tries to live in accordance and maintain balance.

His second duty was to live a life of emulation of the celestial beings as they are exemplars of the “...virtue of the vital spirit in his heart.”⁴⁹ As it was noted previously within this chapter, Hayy needs something to emulate that is closer to the Necessarily Existent Being than himself, as he sees that there must be an intermediary step between himself and Him. These beings are perfect for this role as they have qualities that the divine is believed to possess: “...the properties they had in and of themselves, transparency, luminescence, purity from all taint, and transcendence of all tarnish, their circular motion, whether on their own axis or around some other center.”⁵⁰ Hayy seems to overtly contradict himself while imitating these beings, as he is giving his flesh too much affection. The first step is for him to eat only as much to survive, as his immaterial Self is what matters, not the concerns of his physical being. Though he believes these planetary objects are immaterial, he sees them in the sky and likens their external purity to his own physical body. When observing this, he begins to take great care of his appearance. He would wash his body often to remove grime, and would also lather himself in sweet smelling oils. This also extended to the clothes he wore, as he cleaned them whenever he was not meditating. It seems he is making a mistake that is quite common in modern society with the aphorism “cleanliness is next to godliness”. He is mistaking the need for outer purity, as a means for becoming closer to God, but what is really implied is the

⁴⁹ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 142

⁵⁰ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 146

need for a pristine heart. When he looks to the stars he knows they are immaterial objects, but he looks to their outer form as a model for his physical being, but that is not correct. What he really sees is the true essence of a sentient being, and to become pure he must do it in mind, not in body.

If this is not what Ibn Tufayl is trying to reach, there are a few other possibilities with one of them being that cleanliness is ultimately good for man, and because it is good it comes from the Creator. He may believe that this ultimately comes from nature as birds, such as ducks, are constantly trying to clean themselves. It is also possible that he is trying to tie Islamic tradition with this path towards meeting the Necessarily Existent Being as it is record in both Bukhari and Muslim that, “[i]t is a duty that every Muslim bathe once a week, washing his head and his body.”⁵¹ This is not new terrain for Ibn Tufayl, as he has shown throughout this novel that he wants to assimilate his work into the Islamic studies corpus, even though the end result of his work differs from the Quran.

The second duty he charges himself with is to emulate the planets in both revolutions and rotations. He completed his revolutions by both walking around the island, and more peculiarly he, “...would march around his house or certain large rocks a set number of times, either walking or at a trot.”⁵² It seems that author is again making reference to a pre-established Islamic rite, as he may be emulating the Hajj. The context clue for this suggestion is that he walks around “his house or certain large rocks.” The Ka’ba is referred to as the house of God and it is made of stone. Hayy is once again

⁵¹ Robson, James. *Mishkat al-Masabih* Volume 1. Pg 108.

⁵² Ibn Tufayl. *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 146

performing a physical reminder on earth of the divine, but in a way that is not originally intended in Islam. Tufayl is referring back to his idea of infinite motion and that circular patterns formed by the celestial bodies are both natural and necessary, because of God's first movement. It is also possible that he is independently verifying the need for circumlocution of the Ka'ba by Muslims as it is ordered in this way by the divine through his formation of the universe.

In regard to rotation, Hayy would begin to spin around in circles, keeping his eyes tightly held shut, while willing all other thoughts outside of his head but the Necessarily Existent. Hayy's description of this process is: "[i]f he spun fast enough, all sensory things would vanish; imagination itself, and every other faculty dependent on bodily organs would fade, and the action of his true self, which transcended the body, would grow more powerful. In this way sometimes his mind would be cleansed, and through it he would see the Necessarily Existent—until the bodily powers rushed back, disrupting his ecstasy, and reducing him once more to the lowest of the low."⁵³ He is once again participating in an Islamic mystical practice, this time of the whirling dervishes. They would also rotate in this way to mimic the course of the earth's rotations and revolutions.

Whether or not Ibn Tufayl is trying to justify Islamic practices or not, it is interesting that whether man is solitary or living as a member of society, he needs physical reminders of the transcendence within his life. Obviously Hayy does not have any notion of how to pray, or of the Revelation, but is instinctively drawn to the phenomenon of placing a physical action with knowing God.

⁵³ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 147

The final deduction made from the heavenly spheres are, "...their attributes in relation to the Necessarily Existent, their continuous, undistracted awareness of Him, their longing for Him, their total submission to His rule and devoted execution of his will, moving only at His pleasure and always in the clasp of His hand."⁵⁴ To render himself unto total submission to this being, he postulated that there are two types of attributes rendered unto Him, which are positive and negative. The positive attributes are knowledge, power, and wisdom, and Hayy decided to become like him in this way. To do so required him to know this: "[f]or the positive attributes, knowing they all reduced to His identity (since plurality, belonging to physical things, was totally out of place here) and thus realizing that His self-awareness was not distinct from Himself, but His identity was Self-consciousness and His Self-knowledge was Himself, Hayy understood that if he himself could learn to know him, then his knowledge of Him too would not be distinct from His essence, but would be identical with Him."⁵⁵ What this really boils down to is that for Hayy to become more like Him, he needs to know Him without anthropomorphizing human qualities on a being that supersedes such ideas.

The negative quality is reduced to what he believed as the transcendence of the physical. What he needed to do was to eliminate the physical in himself. This is where he cuts ties with many of the actions he performed while imitating the celestial bodies, and he is able to finally become one with the Necessarily Existent Being. In the second stage, he gave a great attention to actions of the physical. He constantly went out of his way to

⁵⁴ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 146

⁵⁵ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 143

help plants that were endangered, and he had to spin in circles to commune with the transcendent. Why this is no longer necessary, Hayy states, “[these actions he previously committed] were themselves characteristic of the physical, since he would not have seen the objects of his concern in the first place without using a corporeal faculty; and to help them too required use of his bodily powers.”⁵⁶ To reach his new objective, he had to relinquish all claims that the corporeal held over him, to reach his final stage—direct association through the transcendent without the need of physical reminders. This new abhorrence of physical reminders may be a telling aspect of Hayy’s grasp of theological concerns, and Ibn Tufayl’s mystic contemporaries. The need for physical reminders, such as praying five times a day, or fasting during Ramadan, are needed for the common people to experience God. While the mystical way of communing with God transcends the need for physical reminders as they spend so much time doing this compared to their contemporaries.

There are grave ethical concerns if readers are to emulate the path that Ibn Tufayl is promulgating. If the readers are to follow in his footsteps, they may know the divine in a better way, but their actions are not Islamic. Muslims must be concerned with the world and helping their fellow man as it is central to the tenets of Islam. When he meets Absal he says he will follow the Prophet’s path in following the five pillars of the faith, but there is so much more to the religion than just adhering to those principles. A hadith recorded in An-Nawawi’s collection gives a very clear understanding of what types of obligations are required of the community of believers:

⁵⁶ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 148

[w]hosoever removes a worldly grief from a believer, Allah will remove from him one of the griefs of the Day of Judgment. Whosoever alleviates [the lot of] a needy person, Allah will alleviate [his lot] in this world and the next. Whosoever shields a Muslim, Allah will shield him in this world and the next. Allah will aid a servant [of His] so long as the servant aids his brother. Whosoever follows a path to seek knowledge therein, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise. No people gather together in one of the houses of Allah, reciting the Book of Allah and studying it among themselves, without tranquility descending upon them, mercy enveloping them, the angels surrounding them, and Allah making mention of them amongst those who are with Him. Whosoever is slowed down by his actions will not be hastened forward by his lineage.⁵⁷

Followers of Hayy must be careful in giving up their social obligations towards others as it may allow one to commune directly with the divine, but it also makes one an infidel to the religion writ large.

He began to spend all of his time in the cave meditating upon the divine. His discipline increased to the point where he could spend days without eating or sleeping, and he became so entangled with the divine that he lost all of his memories except the notion of his Self, until he finally overcame that last barrier to the pure experience of Providence. It is impossible to try and explain Hayy's interactions with the Divine as it is an ineffable experience that he himself had trouble putting in words, and to comment on it in a second hand manner would not do justice to this experience. What can be taken from this experience is that he becomes both one and many. Like the body with its organs, and the solar system and its planets.

⁵⁷ An-Nawawi's Forty Hadith. Hadith 36 pg 114.

VII.) The Training of Absal (Age 50)

After fifty years of training, Hayy has finally reached the pinnacle of human understanding in regard to all knowledge that one may learn on his own. Ibn Tufayl has an individual arrive on the island that is similar in disposition to Hayy, to show that it is possible to learn philosophical mysticism from a teacher, and it is not required for one to learn this way all by himself. Absal's arrival on the island marks the turning point of the novel from a quest of understanding God, towards understanding man. For Hayy to deal effectively with others, he must learn their language and customs, and if one's own subjective understanding of the divine is congruent with the customs of a people with similar values, then a dialogue may start and education commence.

Unbeknownst to Hayy, his island was situated near another which housed a flourishing civil society, "...which settled the followers of a certain true religion, based on the teachings of a certain ancient prophet—God's blessing on all such prophets....The sect spread widely throughout the island, ultimately growing so powerful and prominent that the king himself converted to it and made the people embrace it as well."⁵⁸ It is possible that the religion on this island may be inferred as Islam, through the statement that it is "based on the teachings of a certain ancient prophet." While this could be interpreted as many ancient religions, Islam seems the most probable as Ibn Tufayl was a Muslim. A question that arises is if it is Islam, why is not named in the story? Though the audience Ibn Tufayl is appealing to is Muslim men, he may in fact be extending past them, constructing a philosophic framework that may be used and accepted by anyone

⁵⁸ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 156

with a disposition that can be easily linked together with mysticism. Another possibility is that while Ibn Tufayl is showing great praise of the religion by having Hayy adopt its traditions, he is also criticizing certain practices. By not giving it a name, he can mute criticisms against his work, so that they will focus on the heart of his message.

There will be two named characters on this island who were both raised with this religion whose focus, "...was to represent all reality in symbols, providing concrete images of things and impressing their outlines on the people's souls, just as orators do when addressing a multitude."⁵⁹ Their names were Absal and Salaman, and they were similar in that they both followed and had great respect for civil and religious laws, and together they would study the religious traditions. What separated these two men was not their piety, but how they liked to explore the divine messages that were handed down to them from their ancestors. Salaman is the literary microcosm for the practical workings of civil society, as he represents the average man in relation to the divine message. He is not a man of deep insight, but that is not necessarily a fault. His disposition makes him the type of person who tries to learn and follow the practices of a religion in the most literal sense, as he feels most comfortable in that setting. He also needs to live amongst other people, as communities represent the temperament he needs to succeed in life; the laws and rules that are handed down to society are the cornerstone in keeping the wild appetites of men in check. By living together, they are able to stave off vice as they are able to act as checks against evil for each other.

⁵⁹ Ibn Tufayl. *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 156

Absal is a different type of man entirely, as he is not swayed by the pressures of the community. He desires solitude and deep contemplation, as it fits with his natural disposition of having an inquiring mind that is in the pursuit of truth. The narrator states that Absal is always trying to understand “the heart of things” and this is perhaps a subtle hint to his likeness with Hayy. The heart plays a key role within Islamic mysticism, which can be discerned from the word Sufi, as it can be translated as “one who is pure in heart.”⁶⁰ It also represents the seat of intellectual learning and is commented on voluminously in such poets as Rumi within in his Masnavi.⁶¹ One can become lost into an infinite digression studying how the heart is related to mystical poetry, but it is more important to the task at hand if one sees how the heart relates to Hayy.

It was his mother's death that drove Hayy towards scientific inquiry and trying to discover the pain that she felt and to alleviate it. Instead he discovered the heart, which he believed was the seat of the soul. If not for the exploration of the heart, Hayy may not have ever have started his metaphysical journey for the discovery of the Creator. By using his heart and reason, he was able to envision this Being in his meditations, and if Absal can understand “the heart of things,” he will succeed like Hayy in his endeavor.

Another important fact that can be gathered from this initial introduction of Absal is that he is a follower of both tradition and law. Though he may see that there exists more than the letter of the law, he never disregards his obligations that are exoterically placed upon him. It should also be noted that when Absal teaches Hayy his devotions, he

⁶⁰ <http://www.sacred-texts.com/isl/moi/moi.htm>

⁶¹ http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/mysticism/islamic_spirituality.html

also practices them without fail. This shows that while mysticism shows a deeper understanding of the faith, it is not above it, or at least Absal is not.

After years of living in his community, Absal decides it best to leave and travel to the other uninhabited island close to his. He knew that he was meant for a life of isolation and decides to spend the rest of his life in solitaire. He packs his affects, pays the ferryman, and divides the rest of his wealth amongst the poor. Though this is quickly mentioned and passed over in the novel, it remains an interesting point of departure between Medieval Orientalism and the modern West. Daniel DeFoe's Robinson Crusoe tells the tale of a shipwrecked man who learns to master and dominate an island through his own sense of rugged individualism and craftiness. When his boat first crashes upon the island, he repeatedly makes trips back and forth from his shelter to the boat and eventually takes the money he finds and brings it back with him to the cave. At this point in the story, there is no indication that he will be saved, and his primary focus should be on his survival, yet he still takes the money even though it is useless to him. If anything, this shows the mindsets of these two differing individuals—Absal is a man who is ready to accept his fate and live in harmony with nature as he leaves behind all traces of civil society, while Robinson is unable to let go of his past and accept his destiny.

All the while Hayy remained in his cave in ecstatic meditation, Absal began living on the island spending his time hunting game and keeping with his prayers. Ibn Tufayl makes notice of Absal's dietary restrictions which were similar to Hayy's, in that he wanted to eat only enough to keep his appetite in check. He is not trying to domesticate the wildlife of the island, but seeks to live in balance with nature.

Hayy awakens from his trance one day and leaves his cave in search of food and he sees Absal from a distance. The appearance of Absal frightened and confused the mystic because he has never encountered anything like him before. He stood nearly as tall as himself, but his human appearance was masked by wearing a fur skin coat making him look bestial. Absal realized that he had been spotted and decides to turn the other way and leave; he came to this island to live in solitude and interacting with Hayy was detrimental to his cause. As he jogged away, Hayy began chasing him, as his insatiable curiosity made him pursue this creature, as he wanted to know exactly what it was. After running for a bit, Hayy let Absal believe that he got away, but he was not privy to the fact that Hayy was secretly following him. He crept up slowly behind the foreigner, as he was performing his devotions to God, and realized that the fur covering his body was not real and that his form was similar to his own. The words coming forth from his mouth were unlike any animal call that he ever heard, and it piqued his fancy. The praying man was crying from his intense love of God, and Hayy wondered what could draw forth such an emotion from a man. Realizing that the man he saw earlier was behind him, Absal began to run again but was quickly grappled to the ground. He feared for his life and began begging for mercy in a language unbeknownst to Hayy; not knowing how to respond to this outburst of emotion, he tried to make soothing animal sounds and began petting his head to show him that he was friendly.

After they both calmed down, Absal looked into his pack and realized that he was running low on the provisions he brought from his home, but he pulled out some food and offered it to Hayy. At first he protested, but after seeing Absal eat some, he finally

agrees to try it because he does not want to hurt his feelings. As the succulent food touched his tongue and slowly made its way into his digestive cavity, Hayy realized that this violated his dietary restrictions because the taste of the food was much better than anything he had ever tasted, and he had to get away from Absal.

His desire to flee from Absal seems to be predicated on his belief that he must batter his senses into submission to better commune with the Creator. Absal serves as a distraction from the goal of achieving happiness, as the time spent with him could be better served with God. It is not until they begin to communicate together, and learn of the mutual shared experiences they have with the divine, that Hayy finally sees that some of his time should be allotted with the teaching of others as it is in itself a reward. This is a return to his belief that the Creator exists as a being that is all good, and reflects this goodness upon people. It is the purpose of man to emulate Him as much as possible, so by showing Absal his trade, he is acting in accordance with the Creator's desire.

Hayy stayed with Absal after eating his food, and the latter believed that he was in no danger. Absal tried to communicate with him in every language that he knew, but his companion never elicited a response. Ironically, he decides to teach Hayy to speak as he was, "...hoping to impart knowledge and religion to him, and by so doing earn God's favor and a greater reward."⁶² Here Absal is trying to teach Hayy to speak so that he may impart wisdom upon him, but ultimately Hayy will be his educator. This sense of subtle superiority that Absal shows is reminiscent of the novel Dune. That story is designed as an allegory for the relationship between America and the USSR during the Cold War, and

⁶² Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 160

how the Near East was caught in the middle because of their large deposits of oil. The Fremen, which are the real world equivalent of Arabs, have a saying which applies to this situation, “polish comes from the city, wisdom from the desert.” Though Hayy is not living in the desert, he is a nomadic, uncivilized person in the eyes of Absal. The polish that Absal wants to place upon him is the social customs and language of his society, but the ultimate triumph of this novel comes from the wisdom imparted from Hayy’s rustic education unto Absal.

The symbiotic relationship that exists between rhetoric and civil society is also another important aspect of this work. It is likely that Ibn Tufayl did not have access to Aristotle’s Politics, it is possible that the latter’s views permeated the Medieval zeitgeist. In regards to rhetoric, Aristotle states, “[n]ature, as we often say, makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal whom she has endowed with the gift of speech. And whereas mere voice is but an indication of pleasure or pain, and is therefore found in other animals (for their nature attains to the perception of pleasure and pain and the intimation of them to one another, and no further), the power of speech is intended to set forth the expedient and inexpedient, and therefore likewise the just and the unjust. And it is a characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust, and the like, and the association of living beings who have this sense makes a family and a state.”⁶³

Hayy learning to speak has drastic connotations for the rest of the novel. When Hayy lacks an understanding of men’s speech, he cannot be held to the same standard as

⁶³ Aristotle, Sir Barker, and R. Stalley. *Politics*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2009. Chapter I

them, as only those who speak can understand the nature of justice and injustice, as it requires men acting in unison to promote the greatest good of the community. For Hayy to finish his education and become an authentic being that confronts and understands all aspects of human understanding, an understanding of justice is the last aspect of his training that he needs to acquire. Before speech, he did not try to be an arbiter of justice amongst the animals of the island. He mimicked their animal sounds and tried to live in balance with the natural ecosystem, but leaving the “state of nature” he is forced to live under new social constraints that only rhetoric will allow him to understand.

In a sense, Hayy loses his innocence when he learns to speak, and he is comparable to the Biblical Adam. Adam was a loving servant of his Creator until the vile use of speech brought him to commit an act of betrayal. The second use of speech in the Bible is the seduction of Eve to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Her words were able to convince him of an action that was not correct, and against God’s law. Something similar will occur with Hayy and the men on the other island. He is forced to use words to explain the ineffability of God, which can only be understood with mental images. The just, or correct path, then is one that can be explained by words instead of actions alone. By having Hayy try to explain God through words, he sullies the experience he has with the Creator, performing an injustice against him. The symbols and anthropomorphic imagery used in the Quran is not bad, but when words are used to describe phenomena, the true natures of ineffable objects are never addressed as they should.

Absal educates Hayy in speech and is then put to question about his origins. He

explains to him the story of his life, education, and the culmination of his training, resulting in becoming one with the divine in a form of ecstatic meditation, which seems to be a foreign idea to him. Absal begins to compare his education and understanding of God with Hayy's and realizes, "...that all the traditions of his religion about God, His angels, bibles and prophets, Judgment Day, Heaven and Hell were symbolic representations of these things that Hayy Ibn Yaqzan had seen for himself."⁶⁴ Absal shared his own religious understanding with Hayy and the latter, "...understood all this and found none of it in contradiction with what he had seen for himself from his supernal vantage point."⁶⁵ The interchange between these two men shows the existing bridge between organized religion and philosophic mysticism. These two practices are not incongruent, as they are able to solve the problem of the divine in either an esoteric or exoteric, with form depending mainly upon the mind of the ruminator. This seems to be where Ibn Tufayl's student, Ibn Rushd received the idea that "truth does not oppose truth". While the latter was trying to justify solely the philosophic experience, Ibn Tufayl is doing the same for a particular form of mysticism.

As Absal's religion did not interfere with Hayy's own understanding of the divine, he decides to take up, "...prayer, poor tax, fasting, and pilgrimage, and other such outward practices."⁶⁶ Besides the need to fast, does Hayy really understand any of the other practices he agrees to undertake? The first issue is prayer, as it remains an entirely

⁶⁴ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 160

⁶⁵ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 161

⁶⁶ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 161

different form of worship than his meditation, as the former is done in hopes that the divine will grant a favor in return for devotion, while the latter is done to solely know the divine in a more intimate way. Does Hayy really need anything else in this world that the divine could grant? He already has the ability to forge a direct link with the Creator, and does not desire any material possessions. What else could he ask for that could be granted?

The same can be said of the poor tax and pilgrimage. The idea of taxes should be an alien idea to him, as he has never had to trade with another human for material possessions, and what would he give to the poor as he only has enough food to keep himself alive? Pilgrimage also seems to be an idea that he has already transcended. The purpose of it is that people will reflect upon the divine while traveling to their destination. Hayy can already do this from inside his cave and probably to a greater extent than he could while circling his island. In his cave, he will not be distracted by sensory objects that will bring him back from his time with the divine, while he will be constantly distracted during the pilgrimage. Accepting and performing these tenets may seem inconsistent with the character of Hayy that has been presented so far, and it is probably due to the agenda of the author. Ibn Tufayl is making Hayy perform these acts, not because they are a better way for him to worship God, but because they will help him fit in with society. Mystics must be connected with the community or their practices will appear to deviate from the true intentions of the faith; to remedy this, they consign themselves to practices that they have outgrown, solely because it allows them to be seen

as a member of the community instead of heretics. This camouflage will allow them to perform their true devotions without the interference of the community.

VIII.) Hayy and Society

The final piece of education involves Hayy not confronting himself and his own understanding, but by encountering those who are unable to understand a Creator that is not dressed in anthropomorphic trappings. He is told by Absal that these men are incapable of understanding the true nature of the divine, but he does not listen to his warnings and they travel to the other island. Absal gathers the group of the smartest men of that island, and has them listen to Hayy's teachings, but they stare at him in bewilderment as they are unable to grasp his teachings. Seeing humanity for what it really is, Hayy tells them that he was wrong, encourages them to follow the path that they were on, and departs with Absal to his own island.

While Absal and Hayy lived in seclusion together on their island, the former explained the religious devotions to the latter. While he accepted most of what was taught to him, he believed that there were two points that existed incongruent with his own understanding of the religion:

[f]irst, why did this prophet rely for the most part on symbols to portray the divine world, allowing mankind to fall into the grave error of conceiving the Truth corporeally and ascribing to Him things which He transcends and is totally free of (and similarly with reward and punishment) instead of simply revealing the truth? Second, why did he confine himself to these particular rituals and duties and allow the amassing of wealth and overindulgence in eating, leaving men idle to busy themselves with inane pastimes and neglect the Truth.⁶⁷

Hayy has outgrown the realm of symbols and sees objects in their absolute form, which comes undiluted from the Creator. He believes that just because he can understand simple

⁶⁷ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 161

ideas, through his own subjective experiences, that he can explain these to others. Though he is not intentionally being hubristic about his ability to teach, it shows that he overestimates the talent and abilities of all men. This is evidenced by the second confusion that proffers itself to him—he does not understand the average man. It can safely be assumed that Hayy and Absal are outliers on the continuum of men, but Hayy has no idea of this scale, as he has never encountered common people. He becomes set in his belief that he can rouse these men into the correct religious practice of contemplation, all the while Absal tries to be the voice of reason in this affair, telling him that the character of these men are defective, and are unable to receive such gifts.

Their journey to the island is plagued by problems, the first of them being that they had no means of transportation there. For an unknown reason, this island remained in complete isolation from the rest of the world. The only knowledge of boat coming to the island was the one that ferried Absal. Not knowing what else to do, the men went to the shore of the island and began to pray both day and night until a boat appeared, and granted them free passage to the other island. The boat appearing is a curious event, as it occurred after the two men vociferously prayed for such an occurrence. Though all speculation upon this phenomenon will remain inconclusive, it is nonetheless an interesting caveat to the story. This seems to be the first time that Hayy prays with the intention of receiving something in return, and his request is granted. Though this event may simply be written off as an act of luck, happenstance or a *deus ex machina* of the writer, it can be argued that Hayy's God is an all knowing, loving, and merciful being. He is able to hear the prayers of two of his faithful followers and grants them their selfless

request—they want to travel to the other island not for material gain, but to spread a better understanding of the divine. The appearance of this boat can be construed as a miracle, as it can be assumed that for at least 50 years no other ships went past the island with the exception of Absal. Hayy's destiny seems to be pushed along by God, as confronting other humans seems to be a task granted with his blessing.

The two disembark from the seafaring vessel, and enter Absal's former village where he travels throughout the town gathering the most learned men, including Salaman, to meet Hayy. He chose the members of this group based upon his belief that they were nearest in intelligence and understanding to both Hayy and himself, and he thought if they could not be taught, no one from the island could. Once the crowd began to form around Hayy, he began to tell them his life story, the education processes he employed, and the religious practices he undertook. During this discourse with the crowd, he tried to educate them on esoteric religious matters, but every time he tried to explain an idea that transcended literal meaning the group was stymied by his words. The more Hayy tried to teach them, the more they began to resent him and his ideas, all the while feigning faces of politeness.

Hayy's failure may be attributed to the fact that he disregards the methodology he has used to study the world his entire life—closely observing all categories of the phenomenon, and then making judgments about them based upon that evidence. Instead, he uses inductive reasoning on an incredibly small sample, Absal and himself, who are outliers in relation to mankind writ large. His failure to understand these people forces

him to return to his prior methodology, and when he begins to classify mankind he sees nothing but evil actions:

[t]hey had made their passions their god, and desire the object of their worship. They destroyed each other to collect the trash of this world, 'distracted by greed 'til they went down to their graves.' Preaching is no help, fine words have no effect on them. Arguing only makes them more pig-headed. Wisdom, they have no means of reaching; they were allotted no share of it. They are engulfed in ignorance. Their hearts are corroded by their possessions. God has sealed their hearts and shrouded their eyes and ears. Theirs will be an awesome punishment.⁶⁸

Rampant materialism remains an enigma to Hayy, due to his own limited understanding of the concept of wealth. On his island, he was never in direct competition with another being for the island's resources, and as the sole, rational being he acted as its governor, maintaining its ecological balance. Absal's island, however, is one filled with all types of jealousies and insecurities, making the inhabitants fear and hate each other. The only way to protect oneself is to amass as much physical property as possible, because it is a symbol of power.

Hayy's preconceptions of what constituted correct worship also led him to believe that even the better qualities of organized religion were not admirable, because of their deficient individual character: "[a]ny attempt to impose a higher task on them was bound to fail. The sole benefit most people could derive from religion was for this world, in that it helped them lead decent lives without others encroaching on what belonged to them."⁶⁹ Religion to the average layman on this island is needed as a formalized structure for the

⁶⁸ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 163

⁶⁹ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 163

teaching of moral ethics. The Imam, Quran and Hadith are all being employed as tools not just to further their eschatological knowledge, but to help them live with other human beings. Hayy does not see the need of this aspect of religion as he has lived his life in isolation, and through his mystical communications transcended the realm of good and evil. His inability to identify the problems of the community ultimately makes him unable to help fix it.

After observing mankind partaking in all sorts of endeavors, he negatively classifies the human condition: “[h]e saw that most men are no better than unreasoning animals.”⁷⁰ His pessimistic depiction of human nature stems solely from the inability of all mankind to see the Creator as he has. It is inconclusive as to why this is true but there may be two possibilities: they were either born with a lesser intellectual capacity or they are unable to free their minds due to social constraints. The former is an unlikely proposition as it would conflict with Hayy’s vision of God. His God is one that is triply perfect and He wants to share himself with his creations. If understanding God in a mystical way came solely from the intellectual capacity, and if it is the best way to know God, it would be antithetical to God to purposefully hide this bliss from the majority of man. The second hypothesis seems to fit the data that he has gathered through empirical evidence—everywhere he looks he sees people clutching their possessions while never wondering where all these possessions and their lives stem from.

After seeing mankind’s true nature, he realizes that he does not belong on this island and wishes to depart. Before leaving, he recants all of the educational doctrine that

⁷⁰ Ibn Tufayl. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 164

he espoused and instead state that, “[they should] hold fast to their observance of all the statutes regulating outward behavior and not delve into things that did not concern them, submissively to accept all the most problematical elements of the tradition and shun originality and innovation, follow in the footsteps of their righteous forbears and leave behind everything modern. He cautioned them most emphatically not to neglect religion or pursue the world as the vast majority of people do.”⁷¹

The novel ends anticlimactically—throughout the story Hayy is able to correctly identify problems, solve them, and move on to even greater challenges. Here Hayy simply gives up after one attempt at teaching. Ibn Tufayl is probably suggesting that the nature of man is incapable of change no matter what methods are applied, but there is room to explore other options besides retreating in defeat. One method which worked with the training of Absal is one-on-one education. There are some ideas that are capable of being taught to a large group and others that cannot; the idea of a becoming one with God through meditation is one of these events which require more personal instruction. If he would have spent some time with these people in a more personal setting, he may have been able to instruct them in his way of worship.

Hayy also does not even hypothesize that there is a way to change the rampant materialism held throughout this society. He assumes that men are incapable of change based upon one educational experience, but there are options available to him if he were to gain sway over the rulers of the village. If it is proven true that these men can learn this way through one-on-one education, then it shows that the educational paradigm currently

⁷¹ Ibn Tufayl. *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. Translated by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York. Twayne Publishers, Inc: 1972. Pg 165

employed was flawed, and it should be changed to one where masters would teach apprentices until they themselves have perfected the art. Also, if materialism is such a concern, there are ways that it can be reduced. If this educational shift proves to be effective, the ruler of the city might start weaning its subjects off of material possessions over an extended period of time until they themselves lived like Hayy.

Hayy returned to his island without considering these options because it may be in accordance with Ibn Tufayl's esoteric message of this novel. He is portraying the mystic and the educational processes he undergoes as an exemplar to the pursuit of knowledge. By having the mystic return to his island in seclusion, he is suggesting the mystics should have a limited role in society. By finishing this novel in this fashion he shows that they are not a threat to society and the materialism that they enjoy, instead they are a fringe group that is willing to train those who wish to follow their ways, but do not force it upon others as the path is long and tortuous.

IX.) Conclusion

Though death may be the debt that all men pay, it is not one that Hayy settles by the end of the novel. If Hayy were to die, it would signal finality to this tale, but this is not a path with a true ending. Though there was an attempt to delineate his life into specific sections within this paper, this is not the case with human life, as it is marked, if by nothing else, fluidity. Each epoch of his life is filled with knowledge of the end product, but he just does not have the right training to fully embrace his destiny until the end of his journey. There are no quantum leaps, just gradual steps which guide him from adolescence, through science, and finally into mysticism.

He is being espoused by Ibn Tufayl as the perfect man, as he transcends both political philosophy and ethics. Though he has accepted and overcame all barriers to knowledge throughout his entire life, those two mental exercises exhausted his desire for knowledge. Though he is made of flesh, he is not truly “human” as he lacks a moral compass, which would help him to understand the nature of good and evil. Living alone for fifty years filled him with an abundance of knowledge of the divine, but not how to transfer this ability in a practical sense to his surroundings. He turns his back upon the physical reminders that the celestial beings represented, and gave up trying to maintain balance in the world. He does this because he cannot infer what the divine means in more than a subjective sense.

He takes his interaction with the divine as the catalyst for ecstatic visions of bliss, but he cares little for the world after attaining this for himself. Yes, he does train Absal, but only because that man was following Hayy’s path before knowing it. He does not try to

understand the nature of man in any meaningful way to relate his ideas to those who at first glance miss his esoteric teachings. He never even attempts to teach them at an individual level, and he writes them off as unworthy of his time.

By not being a member of society, he does not understand the concept of justice, and the role of religion in exacting this amongst men. His God is subjective; if it were otherwise, he would see that He exists as a universal standard of living with others. By taking the qualities associated with Him, and emphasizing them amongst one another, the society becomes ordered in a correct way, helping it flourish. Without empathizing with these other men, his philosophic endeavor fails as he is unable to translate for these people the myths and symbols they use, and transcend them.

He ultimately tells them that their organized religion suits them, and this echoes the aphorism, “in a democracy, people get the government they deserve.” He sees these men as base, and utterly hopeless of achieving his own philosophic status. By relying on symbols, these people are able to live in accordance with law, but they are only limited by the time and effort they wish to devote to surpass this level of knowing. Hayy symbolizes Locke’s idea of tabula rasa, but he never applies his self knowledge of education with the education of others. Though they may have erred in the past and have taken up bad habits, it is not too late to correct them. These men only need discipline of mind to become more like Hayy and less like their current selves.

Finally, as Hayy’s method of knowing God differs from that of Islam, his notion of God also diverges. His scientific investigation led him to formulate a supreme being that lacked the anthropomorphic traits found in the God of Abraham. There he was both the

loving father and vengeful destroyer that tested the faith of his subjects. From him stems the need for justice, order, and law as this God wanted man to cohabitate with others peacefully. Those who would use this book as a guide in becoming a mystic, which was Ibn Tufayl's intent, would not end as the same pious men as they began. Becoming one with God is not synonymous with being a good Muslim. The mystic is following the physical reminders and religious obligations of his faith not because they are necessary to him, but as a way to seem nonthreatening to the organized structure of the religion. In fact, they are antithetical to their practices, as they only desire meditation, not performing good works for other men. One must both appreciate and be wary of this course, as it can be likened to a tortuous mountain path, where one false step can prove fatal, and once one reaches the summit there may not be a way back down.